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The Shah's Weapons Shopping List

No foreign potentate is pampered by Washington quite like the shah of Iran. His latest request for American arms, for example, has the blessing of President Carter. So once again, it looks as if the shah will get just about what he wants.

Yet the president has pledged to hold down arms exports abroad, particularly to dictators who use the arms to subjugate their people. It should be no secret in the White House that the shah runs a repressive regime.

Nevertheless, Defense Secretary Harold Brown sat down personally with the shah last November to go over Iran's military shopping list. Brown reported back to the president at the next Cabinet meeting.

According to the confidential minutes, "Dr. Brown said that he spent over an hour meeting with the shah of Iran. They discussed the longer-term perspective on defense issues, as well as arms purchases from the United States.

"The President said Iran has purchased an average of \$2.7 billion per year in military items from the United States since 1973. Dr. Brown said that Iranian purchases last year were \$5 billion."

In military terms, this would make the shah's remote desert domain our foremost ally.

Brown told the Cabinet that "the figures are being worked out now for this year's purchases." But we couldn't find anyone in government who would discuss the figures.

A Pentagon spokesman said the estimates have been submitted to the

White House. But a White House spokesman said no estimates have been received or are expected. The shah's request will be considered individually and no totals will be available until the end of the year, he said.

Our own sources estimated that the shah would spend around \$3 billion with the Pentagon during this fiscal year. More than \$1 billion has already been spent since the fiscal year began on Oct. 1, they said.

The shah is determined to equip his air force, for example, with the best fighter plane America can produce — the F16. He has already ordered 160 F16s, but now he wants 140 more.

The shah's most controversial purchase will be seven huge flying command posts at a cost of \$1.2 billion. These planes, part of the Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), will be loaded down with super-secret equipment. Congressmen were touchy about entrusting these sensitive planes to the shah.

What the congressmen haven't been told is that one of the shah's top intelligence officers, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Mogharrabi, has already slipped AWACS secrets to the Soviets. He was caught and executed. But it was too late to save the secrets.

Both the U. S. embassy in Tehran and the National Security Council in Washington knew about the Iranian general who sold out to the Soviets. But the scandal was hushed up. Apparently, U. S. officials don't want to offend the shah by interfering with his purchase of AWACS aircraft.

Marston Story—There's more than

meets the eye to the story of the sacking of Philadelphia's U.S. attorney, David Marston.

Jimmy Carter started out to take federal prosecutors and judges out of politics and appoint them "strictly on the basis of merit."

But he collided with political reality in the person of James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), the Senate Judiciary Committee chairman.

His blessing was needed, for example, to get Griffin B. Bell confirmed as Carter's attorney general. Back in December, 1976, Bell and Eastland got together in Atlanta.

Eastland promised his committee would approve appeals court judges, even though they were appointed because of their judicial ability rather than their political connections. But the senator insisted that U. S. attorneys should remain partisan political appointees.

In Philadelphia, meanwhile, Republican Marston was winning corruption convictions.

Marston began investigating the funding and construction of a new wing to the Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia. The hospital allegedly paid \$500,000 in fees to the law firm of Rep. Joshua Eilberg (D-Pa.) for help in securing federally subsidized loans.

It may have been merely a coincidence that Eilberg was pushing legislation that would severely limit the power of a prosecutor to conduct grand jury investigations. It may have been a coincidence again that Eilberg telephoned President Carter and demanded that Marston be fired.